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DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM
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SUBJECT: MINISTERS TELL CODEL LANGEVIN ARMY AND POLICE
TRAINING KEY TO SUCCESS IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: KABUL 1390

Classified By: Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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¶1. (C) Summary. Codel Langevin spent a full 24 hours in Kabul, meeting with President Karzai (reftel), Defense Minister Wardak, Interior Minister Atmar, and Afghan Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representatives. The codel, comprised of Representatives James Langevin (D-RI), Mike Coffman (R-CO), Tom Rooney (R-FL), and Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan (I/MP Saipan), also met with senior American civilian and military leadership from U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A), Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and Regional Command-South (RC-South). In a visit focused on the training of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the increase of U.S. troops in Region, the Codel heard from senior Afghans about their plans for expedited training schedules for Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), steps required to reduce civilian casualties, and a review of current counter-narcotics strategies. The delegation also met with representatives from civil society and discussed challenges for women's rights, media access, education, and the rule of law.

Ministers of Defense and Interior Highlight Strategies

¶2. (C) In a joint meeting with Minister of Defense Wardak and Minister of Interior Atmar, both ministers thanked the Congressmen for the support to Afghanistan by the United States, and in particular the Congress. Discussion centered on training of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), with Minister Wardak telling the delegation that permitting the Afghans to provide for their own security will be the key to enabling a drawdown of U.S. troops and will be cost-effective in the long run. He noted that the goal of training 90,000 ANA troops was reached 10 months ahead of schedule and welcomed the new strategy by President Obama which calls for further increases in ANSF troops. He told the congressmen that there is room to accelerate the training as called for in the strategy, including by using some old garrisons, and in the worst case tents, to house new recruits. He cited as the biggest challenges: minimizing the impact of IEDs and SIEDs, insufficient firepower, and a lack of air mobility (including air support for ground forces).

¶3. (C) Minister Atmar outlined for the delegation the serious work required for the Afghan National Police (ANP) to achieve parity with the ANA in terms of training, accountability, and capability. At present, he said that the ANP is disproportionately taking casualties, about 6 to 10 per day. He also cited corruption and drug-use as well as a lack of capability as key challenges to the ANP. He outlined steps to tackle corruption, noting that more than 11 percent of the top of the ANP have been dismissed and are now being prosecuted. The problems with the ANP, he said, are not a

lack of political will but rather a lack of resources to meet the challenges.

Atmar Counsels on Need to Revise Counter-Narcotics Strategy

¶4. (C) Minister Atmar told the delegation that counternarcotics efforts will require a comprehensive approach involving incentives, alternative livelihoods, and a comprehensive development plan. Suggesting the international community has gotten its strategy wrong thus far, he recommended a return to the drawing board to start fresh and look at a new division of labor between Afghanistan and the Coalition. Atmar suggested a "new compact" be developed and signed that places more responsibility on the Government of Afghanistan, even as the international community continues to resource the effort. He cited efforts in Nangarhar Province as an example of how the Afghans can effectively combat narcotics, noting that more than 700 small and medium targets were arrested, with 75 percent having been convicted. (Note: These are likely inflated numbers, but it is difficult to ascertain the exact numbers without access to court records.)

Civilian Casualties

¶5. (C) Both Wardak and Atmar pressed for a greater Afghan face on special operations in response to a question from the Codel about the impact of civilian casualties. Minister Wardak said reducing civilian casualties is a critical issue and noted that house searches are contrary to the culture of Afghan society. Minister Atmar recommended the Coalition

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"Afghanize" the operations, particularly special operations at night. Wardak said that recent agreements with General McKiernan were helping by assigning ANA and ANP to work with coalition forces and lead searches of homes. These new arrangements, however, were not fully optimized, he said. Atmar noted efforts to better publicize the activities of the Taliban, including working with General McKiernan to undertake joint Afghan-ISAF communications. Atmar said the main issue, though, will be to reduce the civilian casualties so that the issue does not overshadow the real story, that of Taliban operations and their killing of Afghans and Coalition Forces.

NGOs Outline Challenges to Civil Society Evolution

¶6. (U) In a session with Afghan civil society representatives, the Codel heard from participants about women's rights, independent media, judicial reform, disability awareness, and international aid. Mary Akrami, the Director of the Afghan Women Skills Development Center, told the delegation that Afghan women need long-term financial and moral support from the international community. The delegation assured her and her colleagues that women's rights are a priority for USG efforts in Afghanistan. Amin Madaqiq of Radio Azadi described the importance of radio as a low-cost and effective medium to reach rural audiences. According to Madaqiq, Radio Azadi reaches 8.5 million people a week, but requires more FM radio transmitters in provincial centers to reach wider audiences during the elections. Ambassador Ricciardone noted that Ambassador Holbrooke's team is aware of this issue, and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is working on providing the transmitters. Afzal Shurmach Nooristani of the Legal Aid Organization of Afghanistan described the challenges of legal reform in Afghanistan. He told the Codel that he is concerned about GIROA support for Islamic extremism and government acquiescence in the increased number of madrassas throughout the country. According to Nooristani, the judicial system and educational curriculum in Afghanistan are dominated by the religious community.

¶7. (U) Sadiq Mohibi, representing the Afghan Landmine Survivors' Organization, summarized the challenges of increasing public awareness and government activity regarding disability issues. The GIROA should provide livelihood support and increase access to government facilities for the population with disabilities, which Mohibi estimates to be about one million. Joylon Leslie from the Agha Khan Foundation (the sole non-Afghan) expressed concern at the inefficient and wasteful management of aid in Afghanistan. He suggested that the U.S. government use financial assistance to better pressure the GIROA to act responsibly and transparently or else directly fund Afghan-led organizations rather than work through larger contracts or the Afghan Government. USAID officer noted the U.S. legal restrictions on providing monies to organizations that do not have appropriate financial management systems, but the Codel agreed that the sub-contracting process needed to be reviewed in order not to diminish the impact of U.S. assistance.

¶8. The Codel has not reviewed this cable.
EIKENBERRY